Vidarbha region has established the existence of coal bed methane gas in huge quantity for industrial use;

(b) if so, whether the Government of Maharashtra have urged for exploration by ONGC and KDMIPE on priority basis in view of the importance of natural gas and boosting coal mining and industrial activity in the region, if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of time-bound action taken/proposed by Government for exploration of Coal Bed Methane (CBM) in Vidarbha region through ONGC and KDMIPE on priority basis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (c) ONGC has so far not performed any study on coal fields of Maharashtra for Coil Bed Methane exploration/exploitation purposes.

However, M/s. State Industrial Investment Corporation of Maharashtra (SICOM) is in touch with KDMIPE, an R&D Institute of ONGC, to finalise programmes for identification of Coal Bed Methane potentiality for Vidarbha region of Maharashtra.

Drilling Holiday in West Bengal.

1984. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether as per the Kingston's report, drilling holiday in West Bengal was supposed to be in effect for three years from 1992 onwards with intensive continuous seismic survey applying latest technology;

(b) if so, whether the drilling holiday is over;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the detailed result of seismic survey done so far in West Bengal after processing of the available date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) No Sir, Mr. John Kingston, a foreign expert was given a contract to evaluate Bengal Basin and he submitted his report to ONGC in January, 1996.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) As on 1.10.1998, a total of 36664 GLK of 2D and 269 SSK plus 1255 GLK and 67 sq. km. of 3D seismic data has been acquired by ONGC in West Bengal Onland and 8617 GLK 2D seismic data in Offshore. Based on analysis of these data, 40 wells have been drillied in onland and 7 in offshore.

As per Kingston's recommendations 285 GLK of 2D in Contai area and 1255 GLK of 3D in south West of Ichapur area have been acquired so far. The acquired data are in various stages of processing interpretation and no new prospect have been firmed up so far.

Offshore oil discoveries

1985. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA' Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there have not been significant offshore oil discoveries in the mid-eighties;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have any long term strategy in this regard, and

(d) if so, the details thereof?